

corridors will be shown on these maps. These maps and corridors will reflect input from public workshops held in August 1999. The scoping process will continue throughout the development of the environmental document.

Impacts caused by the construction and operation of the facility will vary according to the transportation alternative utilized. Generally, impacts would include the following: transportation impacts (construction detours, construction traffic, mobility improvement and evacuation route improvement), air and noise impacts from construction equipment and operation of the facility, water quality impacts from construction area and roadway storm water runoff, impacts to waters of the United States including wetlands from right of way encroachment, and impacts to residents and businesses based on potential displacements.

Letters describing the proposed action soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the Environmental Impact Statement should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205 Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding governmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Issued on December 23, 1999.

Wilbur Lee Gibbons,
P.E., Urban Program Engineer, Austin, Texas.
[FR Doc. 00-200 Filed 01-04-00; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Harris County, Texas

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environment impact statement will be prepared for a proposed transportation

improvement project in Harris County, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. John Mack, P.E., Federal Highway Administration, Texas Division, 826 Federal Bldg., 300 East 8th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, Telephone 512-916-5516.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and The Grand Parkway Association, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to upgrade the existing road network in Harris County. The proposed improvements being considered, as shown in the Region's Long-Range Transportation Plan, are a multilane controlled access facility in northern Harris County which would be part of a third circumferential loop (State Highway 99) around Houston. The proposed improvement length is approximately 13 miles. Improvements in this area are necessary to provide mobility to the growing area of northwest Harris County.

A Draft EIS will evaluate various transportation alternatives between State Highway 249 near Tomball and Interstate Highway 45 (North) near the northern terminus of the Hardy Toll Road. The majority of this corridor crosses relatively undeveloped properties in Harris County. Among the alternatives to be studied are the "No-action" alternative, Transportation System Management (TSM) alternative, Mass Transit alternative and Roadway Build alternative. Cities and towns in this region include Tomball and Spring. This study is authorized pursuant to the Texas Transportation Commission Minute Order No. 108744 issued May 27, 1999.

The scoping meeting will be on February 2, 2000, at Tomball College, 30555 Tomball Parkway (SH 249) from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Large scale maps with environmental and social features will be available at the meeting, and several corridors will be shown on these maps. These maps and corridors will reflect input from public workshops held in August 1999. The scoping process will continue throughout the development of the environmental document.

Impacts caused by the construction and operation of the facility will vary according to the transportation alternative utilized. Generally, impacts would include the following: transportation impacts (construction detours, construction traffic, mobility improvement and evacuation route improvement), air and noise impacts from construction equipment and operation of the facility, water quality

impacts from construction area and roadway storm water runoff, impacts to waters of the United States including wetlands from right of way encroachment, and impacts to residents and businesses based on potential displacements.

Letters describing the proposed action soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the Environmental Impact Statement should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205 Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding government consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: December 23, 1999.

Wilbur Lee Gibbons,
Urban Program Engineer, Austin, Texas.
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BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Harris County, Texas

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared for a proposed transportation improvement project in Harris County, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. John Mack, P.E., Federal Highway Administration, Texas Division, 826 Federal Bldg., 300 East 8th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, Telephone: 512-916-5516.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and The Grand Parkway Association, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to upgrade the existing road network in Harris County. The proposed improvements being considered, as shown in the

Region's Long-Range Transportation Plan, are a multilane controlled access facility in northern Harris County which would be part of a third circumferential loop (State Highway 99) around Houston. The proposed improvement length is approximately 13 miles. Improvements in this area are necessary to provide mobility to the growing area of northwest Harris County.

A Draft EIS will evaluate various transportation alternatives between State Highway 290 and State Highway 249 near Tomball. The majority of this corridor crosses relatively undeveloped properties in Harris County. Among the alternatives to be studied are the "No-action" alternative, Transportation System Management (TSM) alternative, Mass Transit alternative and Roadway Build alternative. Cities and towns in this region include Hockley and Tomball. This study is authorized pursuant to the Texas Transportation Commission Minute Order No. 108744 issued May 27, 1999.

The scoping meeting will be on February 2, 2000, at Tomball College, 30555 Tomball Parkway (SH 249) from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Large scale maps with environmental and social features will be available at the meeting, and several corridors will be shown on these maps. These maps and corridors will reflect input from public workshops held in August 1999. The scoping process will continue throughout the development of the environmental document.

Impacts caused by the construction and operation of the facility will vary according to the transportation alternative utilized. Generally, impacts would include the following: transportation impacts (construction detours, construction traffic, mobility improvement and evacuation route improvement), air and noise impacts from construction equipment and operation of the facility, water quality impacts from construction area and roadway storm water runoff, impacts to waters of the United States including wetlands from right of way encroachment, and impacts to residents and businesses based on potential displacements.

Letters describing the proposed action soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed

action and the Environmental Impact Statement should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205 Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding governmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: December 23, 1999.

Wilbur Lee Gibbons,

Urban Program Engineer, Austin, Texas.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Corridor 18 (Proposed Extension of I-69 From Indianapolis to Evansville, Indiana)

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared for the proposed extension of I-69 from Indianapolis to Evansville in Southwest Indiana (Corridor 18).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Larry Heil, Planning and Program Development Manager, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Building, Room 254, 575 North Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204, Telephone (317) 226-7491, or Cristine Klika, Commissioner, Indiana Department of Transportation, 100 N. Senate Avenue, Room N755, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2217, Telephone (317) 232-5526.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA in cooperation with the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) will prepare a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on proposed highway corridors to provide better access to Southwest Indiana and better access between Indianapolis and Evansville. The southern terminus of the proposed action will be I-64 just north of Evansville, Indiana and the northern terminus will be I-465 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The length of the proposed corridors will vary between 225 and 274 kilometers (140 and 170 miles).

A previous Notice of Intent (NOI) was published on December 5, 1990 to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for a section of highway between Indianapolis and Evansville

titled the Southwest Indiana Highway. The Southwest Indiana Highway Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was approved for circulation by FHWA on March 27, 1996 and circulated for review and comment. Based upon comments received on the DEIS, the scope and termini of the proposed action are hereby being expanded to include the entire corridor between Indianapolis and Evansville, Indiana. The original December 5, 1999 NOI and March 27, 1996 DEIS for the Southwest Indiana Highway are hereby formally withdrawn. The proposed extension of I-69 from Indianapolis to Evansville (Corridor 18) Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement described in this NOI will be the decision-making process that serves to replace the previous Southwest Indiana Highway decision-making process.

The essence of the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement for this proposed action will be to resolve "big picture" planning issues such as "build" vs. "no-build"; modal preferences; preferred corridor; and logical termini for "projects of independent utility" within the preferred corridor.

This proposed action is intended to strengthen the highway network in Southwest Indiana by providing improved linkages among the existing highway routes in the region and by providing more direct connections among the region's major population centers. By strengthening the highway network, this proposed action is intended to stimulate economic growth in Southwest Indiana by enhancing access to existing centers of economic activity and creating new opportunities where possible.

This proposed action is intended to complete the Indiana portion of Corridor 18, a strategic, high priority highway serving east-central United States. Corridor 18 is planned to be a continuous north-south corridor linking Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Any alternative corridors under evaluation in Southwest Indiana must be analyzed with respect to meeting the objectives of Corridor 18.

The development of the traditional environmental impact study for a project of this length (225 to 274 kilometers (140 to 170 miles)) and scale (the entire region of Southwest Indiana) would be a lengthy process and would result in a voluminous and unwieldy environmental impact statement. Consequently, the FHWA after consultation with various resource agencies, is using a *tiered* EIS concept to focus on issues in an organized manner as discussed in the Council of